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THE MARTYR PRESIDENT.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE BALDWIN PLACE CHURCH,

April 16, 1865.

BY

DANIEL C. EDDY, D. D.

BOSTON:
GRAVES AND YOUNG.
1865.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 309

LECTURE 10

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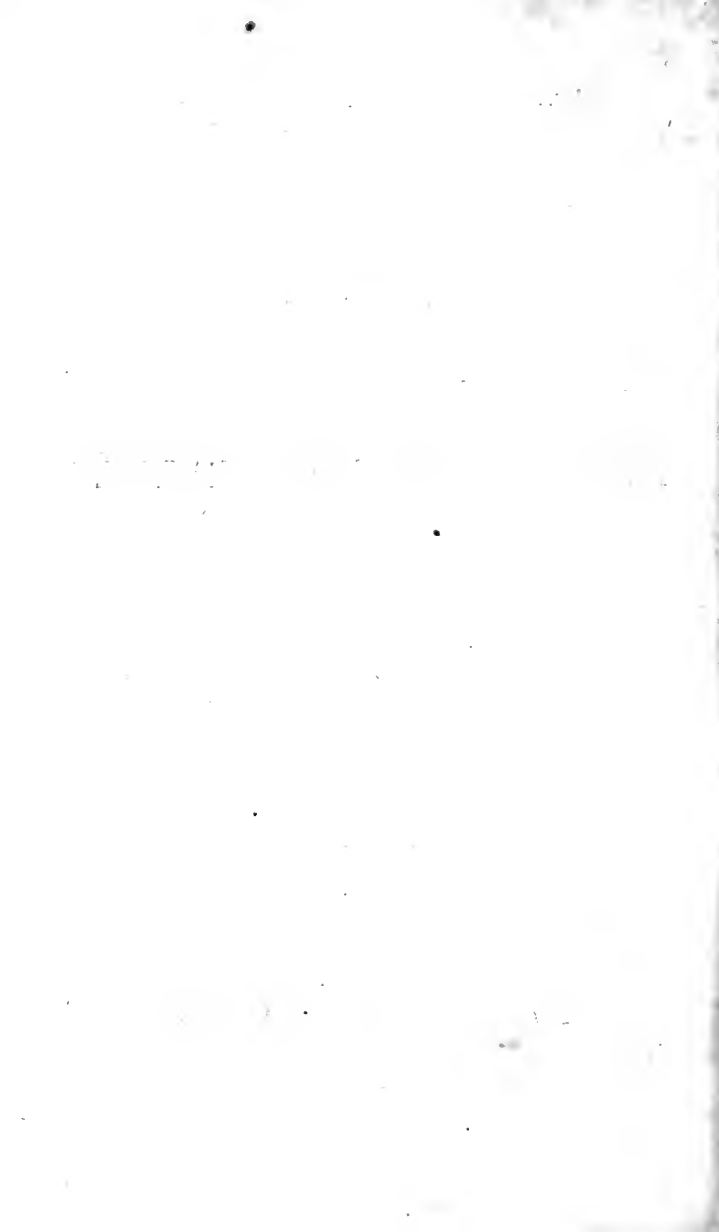
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MEMORIAL SERMON.

“Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”—JOB ii. 10.

There is one terrible fact before us to-day. It stares us in the face whichever way we look. There is one awful scene that crowds upon us, whatever may be the theme of meditation. It seems to me to be wise, therefore, to lead your thoughts directly to that, that we may gather from it such lessons as the event may teach. And yet how can I preach? Let me abandon all the usual forms of sermonizing, and pour out my soul before you.

From week to week God speaks to us in the Gospel of his Son. To-day he speaks to us in a most awful visitation of Divine Providence.

Though we should take some other topic we could not keep our minds upon it. Our thoughts would go wandering to that awful spectacle, over which heaven weeps, and at which hell gloats to-day, in the Federal Capital.

Yesterday morning, at the dawn of day, the whole land was thrilled with the intelligence that Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated. Along the telegraph wires the tidings went

leaping from Washington to Baltimore, from Baltimore to New York, from New York to Boston. The distant East heard of it. The far West heard of it. And everywhere it was heard with pain that the noble President of the United States, the glorious man whose wisdom and foresight have done so much to bring the war to a successful termination, had been brutally murdered, while quietly sitting with his wife in the state box of a metropolitan theater. Never was a great nation dragged down so suddenly from the pinnacles of joy to the most profound sorrow, as was this nation yesterday morning. For several days we had given way to the most enthusiastic rejoicings. The triumphal march of Sherman through the heart of the disloyal South; the capture of Charleston, where treason had so long been nourished; the fall of Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy which was bent on breaking up the Union; and the surrender of Gen. Lee and his army, had given such general joy, that for the week but little business had been transacted. At home, and on the street, the faces of men have been aglow with pleasure; every night the land has blazed with illuminations, bonfires and rockets; every street has been filled with flags that have crowded the air with forms of beauty. Old men have seemed to grow young again, and little children have shouted their hosannas. On every side there were indications of intense delight, and every smiling face we met seemed to teach us how

impossible it was for anybody to be gloomy and unhappy. The joy seemed to increase from day to day, until Friday which was made sacred by the rehoisting of the old flag upon the battlements of Sumter. But ere the lamps of the illumination have gone out, or the thunder of the cannon has ceased to shake the land, we are plunged into the most profound grief. The bells which rang so joyously that they shook the giant steeples, are tolling now; the flags that filled the air with crimson stripes and golden stars, are draped in black; the faces that looked so happy, and shone with such emotions of pleasure, are marked with grief; the eyes that so lately flashed with the electric thrill of victory, are now dimmed with tears.

This is no common grief. It is a sorrow that touches every one of us; that touches the army, the navy, the commerce, the liberty of the land. Mr. Lincoln was the representative of great ideas. He was the embodiment of principles that have been working out through this whole war. Had he died peacefully in his chamber, surrendering his soul to the God who gave it, taken out of the world in some natural way, it would have then been an unspeakable calamity, according to all human view. But to have *him*—the President of the United States, the representative of the Republic, the legally constituted head of the Government, brutally assassinated by a miserable actor, who has crowned a life of mimic tragedy by a tragedy indeed, the guilt of which, if in his veins flowed

blood enough to fill all the oceans of the globe, would not be washed out by it!

You have the picture before you. On Friday evening, Good Friday, as some call it, happy in the idea that no more blood was to be shed, and that this great nation was to be delivered from the curse of civil war, Mr. Lincoln sat conversing in the White House with Speaker Colfax and some other friends. The hour came at which he had agreed to attend the theater. He did not want to go. His wife was not well, and he would prefer to stay at home. But it had been advertised that he would be there. He feared somebody would be disappointed: that the people would expect him, and go away grieved. He went against his inclination to prevent the disappointment of others.

He took his place in his private box. His wife and a friend were with him. Gaily they conversed and chatted as the play went on, and the accomplished actress, Laura Keene, performed her part upon the stage. The evening wore on. The third act had nearly closed, when a demon in human shape entered the box and putting a pistol to the head of the President, fired. The pistol had two barrels. The other was doubtless intended for Lieut. General Grant, who was to have been there that night, seated in that fatal box. The President fell back—his work done. A scream from his wife sent a thrill through the crowded assembly. The assassin sprang from the box upon the stage, waving a dagger in his hand, and shout-

ing "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" words never more falsely used, nor more unjustly applied than then. They carried out that noble man—carried him out to die! Through the night they watched him, as he breathed heavy and slow. The nobles of the land stood over him powerless to arrest the dreadful event. The morning sun arose as beautiful as if no crime had clouded its empire, and with its earliest beams Abraham Lincoln passed away to his eternal home.

In another part of the city a sick man lay. For days a painful illness had kept him confined to his chamber, but he was expecting soon to take upon him the cares of the nation. At ten o'clock his family were around him. We are not told what they were doing. Perhaps they were enjoying that social intercourse which in a home of cultivation and refinement is so sweet and pleasant. Perhaps they were engaged in evening devotion. But there they were, when the bell rang, and a ruffian, holding a paper in his hand, asks to see the Secretary of State, saying that he has a message from the family physician. He was told that no one could enter the chamber. But he pushed aside the servant, and strode into the hall. There he was met by Frederick Seward, and of him he demanded to be led to the room of the sick man. The son refused, and was struck down by a billy or a pistol, and left to die. Striding over the body, the demon reached the chamber, and there was met by other members of the

family, and with his drawn dagger he soon disabled them. Then rushing to the Secretary's bed, he stabbed him several times in the neck or face, and hurried out, supposing he had made his work sure.

And all that was in Washington, in the year of our Lord 1865. Oh, what a dreadful sorrow to this nation! Oh, what a shame and disgrace to us as a people! How dark and dismal does this dispensation of Divine Providence seem to us, who cannot see through the ways and plans of God! What solemnity in the event which God has allowed to take place, depriving us of a President whom we fondly loved, in whose wisdom we trusted, and perhaps of a Secretary of State who has shown such sagacity and judgment in managing the diplomatic affairs of the nation in this time of unparalleled war! Why God should not have allowed Mr. Lincoln to carry out his policy, and settle up this strife, it is hard for us, to-day, through our tears, to see. Why, after saving him from assassination on his way to Washington to take the oath of office; why, after protecting him from all the perils of his four years' administration; why, after keeping him from harm in his recent visit to Richmond where he somewhat uselessly endangered his life, he should allow him to be barbarously, fiendishly murdered, while bells of victory are ringing on the air, and shouts of triumph rend the sky, we cannot see.

We all know Mr. Lincoln was a good man.

His humane disposition, his kind heart, his tenderness toward the erring we all have seen. The only fault of his administration has been too much *mercy*. He has been too willing to pardon. His heart was set on delivering his people from bloodshed and crime, and he so shaped the affairs of the nation as to avoid severe measures, and prevent the destruction of life. When men have been unjustly convicted by Court-martial, he has patiently waded through the evidence, investigated the mitigating circumstances, and given justice to the condemned! When some poor fellow, asleep on duty has periled a whole army, and has been tried and condemned, the President has plead for the offender, and set him free! When he has heard that away off in some distant State lives and mourns a mother who has lost all her sons in battle, he writes her a kind, Christian letter, and sends the love of his warm heart to her in words of sympathy! Had he been hard and unfeeling, we should feel less emotion at his loss. But he was so good a man, so kind, so charitable, that his assassination seems a double cruelty. When has the world beheld the like of this? If we would find any parallel we must look beyond the horrors of the French Revolution, and the enormities which attended the fall of the House of Stuart. It reminds us of the assassination of William of Orange, when a price was set upon his head by Philip of Spain. Motley, the historian of the Dutch Republic, describes that-

deed of blood, which bathed the nation in tears : “On Tuesday the 10th of July, 1584, the Prince with his wife on his arm, followed by the members of his family, were going to dinner, when Gerard presented himself at the door and demanded a passport. The princess, struck with the pale and agitated countenance of the man, questioned her husband concerning the stranger. The Prince carelessly observed that ‘it was merely a person who came for a passport,’ and ordered his secretary to write one. the Princess observed in an undertone that she ‘had never seen so villainous a countenance.’ At two o’clock the company rose from the table, and the Prince led the way to his private apartments alone. As he reached the second stair, a man sprang from the recess, and standing within a foot or two of him, discharged a pistol full at his heart. Three balls entered his body. The Prince exclaimed in French, ‘O, my God, have mercy on my soul! O, my God, have mercy upon this poor people!’ His master of horse caught him in his arms as the fatal shot was fired. He was laid on a couch in the dining-room, when, in a few minutes he breathed his last in the arms of his wife and sister.”

Mr. Lincoln appears to have been a Christian. We know that he was accustomed to rise early in the morning before any of his family were up, and before the people came to see him, and read the Holy Scriptures to strengthen his heart against the trials and temptations of the

day. To a friend visiting him, he said, "When I left my home in Springfield, I felt the need of Divine help, and when I looked upon the dead at Gettysburg, I gave my heart to God." We are sorry that he was at the theater. We would rather he would have been anywhere else, for we believe the theater is no place for a Christian. But we must remember that the President is often dragged to such places against his will, as a part of the routine of his life. He must show himself to the people somewhere, and theatrical crowds often demand the presence of our public men. We look elsewhere, and there we find the evidence of the President's piety. His late inaugural message is one of the most noble documents ever put on record. I doubt whether so grand a message ever emanated from any American President, or any State Governor. In a notice of that address, the London *Spectator* applied to him the eulogium which Macaulay bestowed on Washington. "It was when," says that brilliant essayist, "to the sullen tyranny of Laud and Charles, had succeeded the fierce conflicts of sects and factions, ambitious for ascendancy, or burning for revenge, it was when the vices and ignorance which the old tyranny engendered threatened the new freedom with destruction, that England missed the sobriety, the self command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention (of Hamden) to which the history of revolutions furnish no parallel, or furnishes a

parallel in Washington alone." The *Spectator* says: "If that high eulogium was fully earned, as it was, by the first great President of the United States, we doubt if it has not been as well earned by the Illinois peasant-proprietor, and village lawyer, whom by some chance inspiration or Providence, the Republican Caucus of 1860 nominated for the Presidential chair." In that address, speaking of the two sections of the country, Mr. Lincoln said:

"Both read the same Bible and prayed to the same God, and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that neither of them has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes. Woe unto the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offenses come. If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of these offenses, which in the providence of God must needs come, but which having continued through his appointed time he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offenses came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him."

There seems to be something prophetic of

his own death in a single section of the message, and his own calm, unalterable faith in God and his purposes, should be our faith today, as we contemplate the fiendish work which for some wise purpose God has allowed to be done. He says:

“Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago so still it must be said, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

And with what humane, noble words does this great message, which puts him, in the estimation of the civilized world, in the category with Hamden and Washington, close:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

This is his dying charge, and we want no nobler one. It sounds strangely like the last words of Him who, when dying on the cross,

looked down upon his murderers, and prayed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

This tragic event teaches us several important lessons.

1. It shows us our absolute dependence on God. All day long, yesterday, the question was asked, "What shall we do now?" We have spoken of the death of Mr. Lincoln as a most dreadful calamity, and so it is. But to whom shall we look? Certainly to God. He has been our confidence and trust all through, and we must trust Him now. When Gen. Scott was laid aside, we trusted in God. When McClellan failed us, we trusted in God. When in quick succession Pope, Burnside and Hooker were defeated in those great battles, we trusted in God. Now Abraham Lincoln is dead, shall we not trust in God still? Perhaps we have relied too much on an arm of flesh. Perhaps we have felt that the might and the power were with him, and God has reprovèd us for it. All along we have had victories! We have seen our enemies defeated, our foes swept away, our arms victorious! City after city has fallen into our hands! Slavery has received its death blow! We have argued that the war was a blessing. We have said, that after we are gone, our children, and our children's children will bless our names and memories. We have professed to believe that God's hand was in it all—God's hand at Manassas and Chancellorsville as well as at Vicksburg and Gettysburg.

And do we wish to repudiate the doctrine now over the grave of Abraham Lincoln? Do we wish to deny our absolute dependence on God, and our sense of his guidance because an event so dark and dreadful has occurred? Though we cannot see it to-day, we may be sure that God's hand is in this dreadful event as sure as it has been in any event of our history. Depend upon it, Christian men, that Satan, in taking away President Lincoln, has outwitted and overleaped himself. You may be sure, that however dark this event seems to-day, that God will bring good out of it. Heaven must rise up against a race of murderers, and God must overwhelm them! Wait, wait, and you will see the working of God, His hand moving in all this dark and tangled mass of circumstances. "Long ago," remarked one of our daily papers yesterday, with great truth and appropriateness, "by thoughtful men and careful observers of the signs of the times, it has been clear as sunlight that the fate of this nation was taken out of the hands of men, and carried along visibly by the arm of the Almighty. The utmost wisdom of man has through the whole of this revolution been confounded, and the efforts of the strongest and most capable leaders on both sides have availed nothing. Their words of warning and of counsel have been of no avail, and altogether unheeded in the gigantic march of irresistible events. They have been driven along like helpless waifs on the ocean billows, and their

struggles to help themselves have been as vain as those of infancy.”

And this great lesson we all are taught—we must depend on Jehovah. The motto we have put upon our coin, must be the calm, holy creed of the nation—“In God we trust.”

2. The deed of shame and blood shows us the class of men with which we have to deal. We have tried to shut our eyes to the fact, but we cannot disguise it—our enemies throughout this war have pursued a course of Satanic malignity. Argue as we may, our Southern people are a difficult race. Slavery has given a different code of morals, a different law of ethics, a different idea of religion. They have been educated under a different civilization and are another people. Slavery has barbarized them, and made them a people with whom we can have little in common. We had an idea of Southern civilization when Judge Hoar was driven out of Charleston. We saw it again when Sumner fell bleeding in the Federal Senate. We had an illustration of it when ornaments were made for Southern ladies of the bones of the brave soldiers killed at Bull Run. We have had evidences of it in the atrocities perpetrated upon our poor soldiers who have been unfortunate enough to be taken prisoners. The horrors of Libby Prison are unparalleled in the barbarities of any civilized land. The atrocities of that place and Belle Island, perpetrated with the sanction of Gen. Lee, under the eye of the arch-traitor, in view

of Southern clergymen and Southern women, mark a state of infernalism such as we never dreamed of before. And now we have another exhibition of it, in the base, wicked, wanton assassination of the President, the horrid mutilation of Frederick Seward, and the probable assassination of his father, the Secretary of State; and God only knows how many other persons were to be included in the ruin and destruction. It is plainly evident that Secretary Stanton was doomed! A demon cloaked and disguised was at his door when his friends arrived to tell him of the assassination of the President. General Grant was doubtless to have been added to the dreadful list. Who else we may never know. What fiendish work! What hellish contrivances! It is of a piece with the butchery at St. Albans! It is part and parcel of the attempt to fire a dozen large hotels in New York, by which thousands of women and children, innocent and defenseless, would have been doomed to death in its most horrid form.

These are the wretches with whom we have to deal, and it is time we were aroused to the necessity of more decided action, and more prompt vengeance. We have been throwing grass at the rebels, while they returned steel and lead. President Lincoln is the victim of *mercy*, as it is called. The timid policy of the government is responsible for his death. If that same policy is to be carried out, who knows but J. Wilkes Booth, if arrested, will

be released on parole, ordered to report at the Continental Hotel in Philadelphia, or Willard's in Washington? I have faith, under God, in Andrew Johnson. I know he disgraced you and me and everybody on inauguration day, but I believe him to be a man of iron will, a bold and fearless spirit, truly loyal, and deeply imbued with the spirit of liberty. We have had the administration of mercy and forbearance; and I trust we are now to have an administration of justice—age of retribution!

3. In the light of this event we see the need of new guarantees for the future preservation of Peace, and the future safety of the Republic. The policy of President Lincoln seemed to be to yield in every thing but Union and Emancipation. On these two most essential points he insisted. On all others he was disposed to yield, and with him he was carrying the country. In the general joy felt over recent victories, in the speedy prospect of peace, in the kindness which has sprung up in this day of rejoicing, we have been disposed to give up almost everything. But the massacre in Washington startles us, and shows us the need of a different method of settlement. It is plain that the leaders in this Rebellion must be executed or banished. The Union is not safe if they are allowed to stay here. The honor and the safety of the nation demand that a monument of national indignation be raised so high that it shall be seen down the stream of time a thousand years to come.

While that great and noble man was being murdered in Washington, rebel sympathizers were preparing an ovation for General Lee in New York. While Secretary Seward was being stabbed, the paroled rebels were lounging about the hotels in Washington. We have reason to believe that Andrew Johnson will inaugurate another system of things. If it be so, we may thank God and take courage. The sooner the screws are put on, the better for the nation and the better for humanity. The innocent will not suffer; the guilty should! Is it no crime to break up the Government? Is it no crime to slaughter four years long, the young men of the nation? Is it no crime to starve our soldiers? Have you ever seen any of them come home, wasted, gaunt, skeleton forms, starved, dying, the poor shadow of men who went out—treated so, not necessarily, but treated so that they should never be of any more use to the nation? Is it no crime to murder the President, and the Secretary of State? The men who are responsible for all this must never sit in our National Councils, must never be feasted at our tables, must never be privileged with the blessings of this Republic! The wretch who slew the President is nobody! Others are responsible. Others are guilty. Others should suffer. Over the grave of Abraham Lincoln let this nation demand a reign of retribution.

Another thought. The intelligence of this horrible event has gone across the ocean. It

will be commented on in England. We know what will be said about it. But England and the world will soon know that the death of the President at the time when we need him most, will not shake the stability of the nation. The regular progress of government will be a sublime comment on American institutions and on Republican Government. No nation in Europe from London to St. Petersburg could have its monarch assassinated without a revolution which would sink dynasties in seas of blood. But look at the Republic! On Friday night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in the Theater; on Saturday morning Andrew Johnson grasped with a firm hand the reins of government as they fell from the dying hand of his predecessor. The Republic lives, though the President dies. There is no revolution, but the nation adheres calmly to its great work of putting down the civil war, already raging. Herein we behold the majesty of Republican Government, the sublimity of American institutions.

Abraham Lincoln, the good, the noble and the true is dead. Andrew Johnson is the President of the United States. As such, pray for him. Let the prayers of this great, but bereaved and afflicted nation, make him strong, save him from temptation and lift him up to God. God has some wise end in bringing him to the Government in such a time as this. With unquestioning faith in God and his purposes, let us receive the new President as his

gift, and watch with reverence and respect the unfolding of the Almighty plan. Mr. Lincoln was but an agent in the hands of God. Mr. Johnson will move and act as God wills. God grant that wisdom may be given him in this hour of mingled triumph and fear.

And O what a lesson as to human frailty and human sinfulness! Who can doubt the depravity of man while viewing the incidents of this war? How has it brought out the odiousness of the human heart! What a comment is it on the state of our world after Christianity has been working nearly nineteen centuries for its salvation. But we have no reason for despondency!

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.”

What shall be done with the assassin when he is arrested? The Dutch Judges who pronounced sentence on the murderer of William, of Orange, according to the historian, decreed:

“That his right hand should be burned off with a red-hot iron.

“That his flesh should be torn from his bones with pincers in six different places.

“That he should be quartered and disemboweled alive.

“That his heart should be torn from his bosom and flung in his face.

“That he should have his head taken off.”

We ask no such vengeance on the assassin of our President—God will deal with him!

But what shall be done with the men by whom Booth was paid? What shall be done with the bloody leaders of the bloody secession, whose guilt is embodied in the terrible act of this miserable actor? Aye, that is the question for us to ponder, not with revenge, but in the coolness of sober judgment.

Girard tried to make the murderer of William saintlike, by lifting his bleeding face, as they put him to torture, and exclaiming, "*Ecce homo.*" Booth endeavored to make the assassination of Mr. Lincoln heroic, by shouting "*Sic semper tyrannis.*" The latter will ever be as infamous as the former. The Spanish Government never could clear itself of complicity with the murder of William, and the Confederacy of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and their associates in crime, will sink to the deepest infamy, saddled with the murder of Abraham Lincoln.

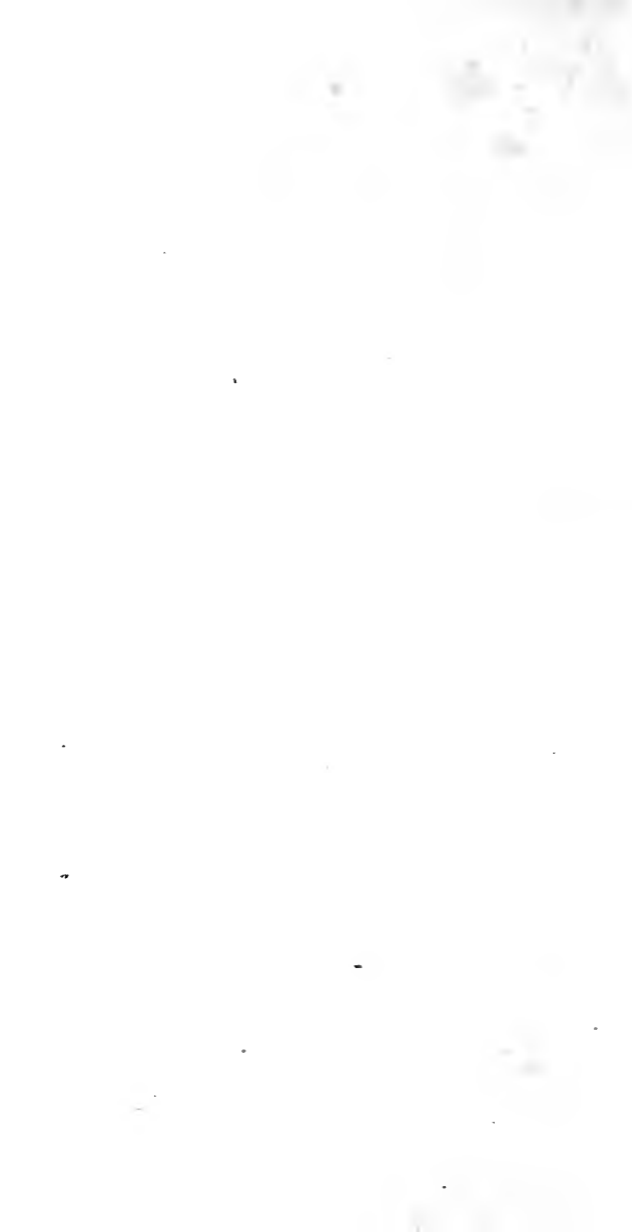
This black event is but the cloud that hides some design of God. It cannot roll back the tide of success. It cannot stay the return of peace. It will hasten the event for which we have prayed, and if there be honor or manhood left in the South, it will promote a more righteous sentiment even there.

Then, while we mourn for the father of our Republic, the head of our Nation, let us reverently adopt his own language: "If God wills that it (the war) continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and un-

til every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

It is said that before the inauguration, for three days the sun had hidden its face. Just as Mr. Lincoln arose to speak the cloud lifted, and the smiles of the glorious orb of day broke upon us, says a beholder! It was noticed by many, who exclaimed, "It is beautiful!" "Is it not significant?"

We trust that the sun of Eternal Glory has dawned upon his ransomed spirit, and, while a whole nation mourns his loss, and his grave is bedewed by the tears of an affectionate and grateful people, the splendors of an everlasting day are being poured around his head now crowned with the diadem of a conqueror.



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